

The Handbook of British Ferns. By T. MOORE, F.L.S.
Third Edition. London, 1857.

Four years since we noticed at some length the second edition of this excellent book, and it is therefore unnecessary to occupy much space in announcing the publication of this fourth edition, which possesses all the valuable qualities of its predecessor and has been carefully revised throughout. There is very little change in its author's opinion concerning the limits of species or nomenclature. The *Athyrium rhaticum* is again joined to *A. filix-femina*. *Lastræ Fœnisecii* takes the name of *L. æmula*, from the discovery that it is certainly the *Polypodium æmulum* of Aiton: thus the long controversy concerning the proper name of the plant is set at rest in a satisfactory manner.

But the most marked characteristic of this edition consists in the immense number of forms which are described in it. Most of these have very little interest for the botanist, although collected with avidity by the cultivator. Mr. Moore has usually pointed out with care which of the forms are deserving of botanical attention; nevertheless it seems to us that he might well have divided the several species into their true varieties (if we may so call them) and arranged under each the less definite forms. Thus the botanist would have benefited, without any injury to the cultivator.

As in the former editions, much attention is paid to the mode best adapted for the culture of the plants.

The book is our best work upon British Ferns, and will be useful to all those who take an interest in them.

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

July 14, 1857.—Dr. Gray, F.R.S., V.P., in the Chair.

ON STOASTOMIDÆ AS A FAMILY, AND ON SEVEN PROPOSED NEW GENERA, SIXTY-ONE NEW SPECIES, AND TWO NEW VARIETIES FROM JAMAICA. BY THE HON. EDWARD CHITTY.

Stoastomidæ! When I first open my cabinet of this Family to the spectator, two observations are generally made. The one, "How minute! how could you trouble yourself with such specks! they are not worth seeing, for we cannot see them." Then follows, "Well, they are very wonderful; but how did you collect them?"

To the first observation I answer, "True, they are but specks, and have very much injured my eyesight; but they are worth seeing under the microscope; for they are worthy to rank, and must rank, in point of sculpture, with the most wonderful and beautiful shells known to conchologists, and most of them are most worthy of a sculptor's or designer's study." Among the *Helices*, *Pupæ*, *Achatinæ*, *Cylindrellæ*, *Bulimi*, &c. there are plenty of minute species almost microscopic, and interesting enough; but, under the microscope, these only improve in size, and no further beauties are unfolded, and little further interest is given to them by its use. The